

OUR PAST BISHOPS

O'Neill CÔTÉ (1939-1986)



Born in Cloridorme and raised in Matane (Gaspésie), Quebec, O'Neill Côté was rector of the parish of Montreal-Longueuil when he became the third bishop ordinary. He was consecrated in 1978 and took as his motto a quotation from the Gospel of St. John: UT OMNES UNUM SINT ("Let all be one", John 17, 21). He had been ordained priest and mitered in 1973-1974.

Bishop Côté was married and had a son. A graduate in pedagogy from Laval University, he studied theology at McGill University and at the College of St. Thomas, where he received a Bachelor of Theology. In civilian life, he was Senior Education Advisor in the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development.

He resigned from active ministry due to illness in 1981 and died on July 30, 1986. He had the satisfaction of seeing the Ordinariate receive Letters Patent issued under the Religious Corporations Act of Quebec.

Casimir DURAND (1879-1957)

Born in Glandage (Drôme) in France, Casimir Durand did his primary schooling in his native village, his maturity at the Juniorate of the Canons Regular at Saint-Antoine l'Abbaye (Isère) and his theology at their seminary in Manitoba, Canada (1898-1901). He was a missionary there, particularly among Aboriginal Canadians.

Ordained by Bishop Vilatte, he was parish priest in Chicago, Windsor (Ontario) and Minneapolis, Minnesota, between 1915 and 1957. During this period, he was diocesan theologian and led the Midwest Mission Board. Chosen as the second bishop, he was consecrated in Minneapolis in 1926.

He was married and had two twin sons, Paul and Rene. In civilian life, he was a Medical Doctor. He died in Prior Lake, Minnesota, on January 6, 1957. Jean-Nicolas Baudot, ordained by him, assured the apostolic administration until his death in 1974.



René VILATTE (1854-1929)



Born in Paris, René Vilatte came to Canada as a teacher and became a disciple of the reformer priest Charles Chiniquy, at the origin of the **Christian Catholic Church**. He shared his vision of a purified Church which presents the Gospel as did the Primitive Church; exercises authority according to the spirit of free America and seeks the unity for which Christ prayed.¹ He was admitted and trained by the reformer Chiniquy at St. Anne (IL), after studying theology at McGill University in Montreal. Sent by him to the French-speaking colonists of Wisconsin, he founded there several parishes, and in Canada, after his ordination by the Christian Catholic Church of Switzerland in 1885.

In 1888 was established the Ordinariate, incorporated in 1890 and recognized alongside the Roman, Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant churches. René Vilatte was elected as first bishop ordinary. He was consecrated in 1892, by an Independent Catholic Church in Sri Lanka, attached to the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

He was a generous humanist and earned the esteem of the church, despite his critics, until his death on 1 July 1929. He had retired in 1925.

¹ Bishop Vilatte, Autobiography, 1910.